

Bowditch (H. I.)

HIPPOPAGY.

BY

HENRY I. BOWDITCH, M. D.

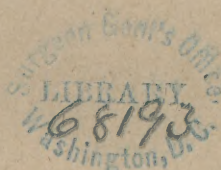
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HIPPOPHAGY.

DURING my recent visit to Europe, I was requested by a professional associate in a neighboring town, to learn all that I could upon the use of horse-flesh as a food for man, and subsequently he embodied in a letter, from which I take the following extracts, the reasons for his request.

“In my morning visit to the meat-shop, I have for five years observed the poor (generally women) looking for something in the name of meat, cheap enough for them to buy. After hunting a while, they go away empty, or get a piece of bone with very little meat on it, or a salted junk, too often salted only because previously nearly spoiled by age. Many of these customers are known to me, and as I thought of their children who really needed meat, I was often led to think whether anything could be done to provide cheaper food of the same nature.

“The horse was, of course, thought of; and then there came up the other side of the question, equally human, or at any rate, humane—namely, the welfare of the horse in his old age.

“Our main street is one of the avenues to Brighton. Once every week our eyes, our ears are distressed with the passage to and fro, driven by cruel men, of frame after frame of what were once the proud nags of rich men; and let any one go to Brighton of a market day, and he will be impressed with what must have been their worth and position in earlier days.

“What is meaner than to see a horse that has been worn out in our service, starved and abominably abused till he dies? *Old* horses—the best of them—usually end life after this fashion.

“In fact, a class of cruel, brutish men get their miserable living from work extorted from them. This item of the suffering of *old* horses I have never seen put as it should be. If these old and tortured animals can be fattened and eaten, let the humane men attend to it.

“There is a practical objection, I am told, to eating horses in this country, because they are so costly, that it would not pay to fatten, until age had destroyed their value.” . . .

The above extracts contain in embryo all the questions involved in the subject. When first proposed to me, the matter seemed trivial. As I have investigated it, it has become more important.

I propose, therefore, to discuss it chiefly under the three following heads :

First.—The history of the use of horse-flesh as food by various people in different countries. Under this division I shall present evidence

a. That in refusing to eat horses, the western, northern, and southern Europeans, and civilized North and South Americans, are an exception to the general rule of mankind over the globe.

b. That even in Europe, it was the common food of the people, and considered especially appropriate for sacred feasts and for pagan altars, long before the introduction of Christianity;* and finally, that it has been under the pressure of necessity, used by Europeans on various occasions, not only without injury, but with absolute good to those who have partaken of it.

c. That it was priestly domination that drove hippophagism out of use among the Germans, about the sixth century of the Christian era; and it was a love of Christianity, mingled with much worldly wisdom, that stopped its use in Iceland, four centuries later.

Second.—I shall give a brief history of the introduction again of horse-meat as food into modern Europe, under the directions of the constituted authorities of nearly all the continental powers, and especially I shall refer to the very recent use of it in Paris, and of the rapid progress of hippophagism in France, notwithstanding the various objections urged against it.

* Laing (Translation of Heims Kringlia or Chronicle of the Kings of Norway, by Snorre Sturleson, vol. i, p. 85,) says: the best established of religious practices of the Odin worshippers, was the partaking of horse-flesh at the sacred festivals, "as commemorative of their ancestors;" and again: "hippophagism was the test of Pagan belief, as baptism is that of Christianity." Hence Saint Olaf in the eleventh century punished hippophagism with death.

Third.—I shall have some remarks to make upon the question with reference to the necessity in Europe or America for the use of horse-meat as food.

FIRST PART.

HISTORY OF THE USE OF HORSE-FLESH AS FOOD BY THE VARIOUS NATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

Hippocrates, in his work on diet (*Περὶ Διαιτήσεως*) says, that it was used in his time, and that it was a “light” article of diet compared with other food, [p. 76.]*

Xenophon recites that during the Retreat of the Ten Thousand Greeks, the soldiers found in the deserts of Mesopotamia a wild ass, whose flesh was like that of deer, but of a more delicate flavor, [86.] (*Xenophon-tis Scripta*, Weiske’s, Leipzig, 1799, tom. 3, p. 25.)

Galen objected to it, but rather as a matter of taste than of salubrity, [76.] (*De quadrupedibus: Usus in cibis.*)

Pliny says, (*Nat. Hist.*, lib. 8, ch. 69,) that Mæcenus taught the Roman epicures to use asses’ meat. It was a source of pride to Africa that she produced that species of “game,” [86.]

In Persia, according to Oelschlager (*Olearius en*

* Almost the whole of this part of the subject I have gleaned from a very learned work by Isidore Geoffroy St. Hilaire, entitled “*Lettres sur les Substances Alimentaires et particulièrement sur la Viande de Cheval.*” Paris: Victor Masson. 1856. 12 mo., pp. 261. The numbers in brackets refer to the pages of his work.

Moscovie, Tartarie, et Perse, Schleswig, 1647, French translation, 1656, p. 511, t. i,) and to Kerr Porter, (Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, t. i, p. 460, 1821,) the same taste prevails, and the excellence of this food is proverbial. Quarters of the wild ass are sent as presents to friends, as haunches of venison are with us, [p. 89.]

In Africa, Marmol, (Africa. French translation by M. Perrot d'Ablancourt, 1667, t. i, p. 50,) states that a similar usage prevailed, and wild horses were also taken. Mungo Park, (First Voyage in the Interior of Africa, Castèra's translation, 1800, t. i, p. 166,) confirms this statement. [93.]

Phillips, [93,] (Voyage en Guinée, pp. 215 and 228, etc.; and Histoire Générale des Voyages, 4to, t. iv, p. 353,) asserts that in Juida, in Africa, the negroes raise up a small and very intractable species of horse solely for food.

The Moors near Tunis and Algiers, eat their own horses, mules, and asses, [94.] Monsieur Lucas, member of a scientific commission on zoology, spent many months in these places, and often partook of this food, and preferred it to beef procured there.

Herodotus states, that in Asia horses and asses were eaten from the earliest times by all classes. Horses and oxen, chamois and asses were roasted whole on birth and feast days. The custom prevails as widely now as formerly, from the extreme East to the Ural mountains. [97, 98.]

The Chinese physicians object to the use of horse-meat, and yet they give most absurd directions in re-

gard to eating it. Hence the Chinese eat all horses they can get, whether they are killed, or die of various diseases, or from old age, [98.] (Duhalde. Description de la Chine et de la Tartarie Chinoise, t. 2, p. 138.)

According to Pallas and others, the Tartars, generally the inhabitants of Russia in Asia, and even those to the north and east of Europe, formerly had this same food, [100-105.] (Pallas' Voyages, t. i, p. 376; Beauplan's Description d'Ukraine, 4to, Rouen, 1660, p. 83; Huzard, art. Cheval, Encyclopédie Methodique Dict. de Médecine, t. iv, 1792, p. 694.)

According to H. Cloquet, (Faune des Médecins, t. iv, p. 74, 1823,) the Asiatics and Mongolians of the present day use it.

The Calmucks regard horse-meat as superior to every other, [101.] Bergmann, Nomadische, Streifereien unter den Kalmüken, 12mo., Riga, 1804, 2d part, p. 76.)

In Wetteravia, (part of Germany,) according to Montgomery, the nephew of Buffon, sausages and good soup are made of the same. This writer also states that the Cossacks likewise drink the blood, after having made the horse race hard, [105.]

The line of Virgil,

"Et lac concretum cum sanguine petat equino,"

refers to this fact. Georg., lib. 3, and Horace (Ode, lib. 3, vol. iv,)

"Et lætum equino sanguine Concanum,"

points to similar customs among the ancients.

Martial (de Spectaculis, 3) and Sidonius Appollina-

rius, (op. 1614. Paris. Sismondi ed., p. 318,) confirm the same in reference to the Sarmatians (the ancestors of the modern Cossacks of the Don,) and the Getans, (the predecessors of the Transylvanians, Moldavians, etc.,) along the eastern Danube of those times. In other words, there is ample proof that all these people, most of them Asiatics, and others borderers on Europe, are now or formerly were, hippophagists, [105.]

Coming now to the Celts, that Indo-Germanic people, that gradually occupied parts of France, Spain, Scotland, and Ireland, we have still more conclusive proof that they ate horse-flesh. This proof is derived from two famous edicts fulminated from Rome against hippophagy. Both are addressed to St. Boniface, the apostle of Christianity in Germany, and were intended to counteract the influence with the new converts of their former sacrifices to Odin, the memory of which was kept alive by this food, as already mentioned. Hence Gregory III. [107] (vide correspondence de St. Boniface, 1605, by Serravius,) sent his missive. The Pope wished by this interdict to show his abhorrence of all pagan worship and of things connected with the sacrifices. His holiness declared that such an hippophagic banquet was "*immundum et execrabile*," and penance was justly due for such an act. No anathemas could, however, overcome the love that the Germans had for this ancient food—"imprimis in deliciis," as Keyser calls it, (De Interdictu Carnis Equinæ Usu. Antiquates, etc., Hanover, 1720, page 321, etc.) So earnest were even the best converts against the giving it up, that

Zachary, St. Gregory's successor, sent another papal bull forbidding not only the eating of the horse, but also of the beaver and the hare. The two latter were, however, soon allowed; and only the flesh of the horse was still forbidden, because especially pagan in its associations. These various influences gradually drove the use of this food out of Europe—"magno detrimento rei familiaris," says Keysler, [109.]

Its use, however, continued for at least two or three centuries later in Iceland, and it would appear that there the love of it was so great that the priests made an exception in favor of it to some of the new converts. Perhaps there never was a more worldly-wise provision to produce conversions to Christianity than that which was made on this occasion. In the celebrated *Kristni Saga of Iceland*, (*Ampere, Literature et Voyages Allemagne et Scandinavie*, Paris, 1833, page 404,) is the following statement: Thorgeir, the lawgiver, and chief of the republic of Iceland, called all the people together, and said to them, "All the inhabitants of Iceland ought to be baptized, and to worship the same God." As to the custom of exposing infants (*exposer les enfants*), and of eating horse-flesh, these will be allowed; so also a man will be allowed to sacrifice in secret, but if any one sacrifices openly and before witnesses, he shall be banished for a certain number of years. Ampere remarks, "that this singular agreement was made in the year 1000. All the inhabitants were baptized in the warm springs of the Geyser, and some years after that there was no open and avowed pagan in Iceland," [242.]

Passing over to Oceanica, we find that Marsden, [97] (*History of Sumatra*, Parraud's edition, 1788, t. 2, p. 188,) asserts that not only it is used as food, but is considered a real delicacy there.

Similar reports come from travellers in America. Wild and domestic horses are used [94] by several of the people of South America.

For example, Azara, (*Histoire Générale du Paraguay*. French translation by Moreau Saint-Méry. 1801, t. ii, p. 302,) states that the wild horses of the Pampas furnish food to the uncivilized Indians in their wandering life, [94.]

Sir Francis B. Head, Bart., (Rough notes taken in some rapid journeys across the Pampas and among the Andes. John Murray, 4th edition, p. 63,) confirms the above, and draws the inference, "I sincerely believe that they, the Pampas Indians, are the finest set of men that ever existed under the circumstances in which they are placed. They are all horsemen, or rather pass their lives on horseback." *

In Brazil, many tribes use this food, [95] and Mons. Alcide d'Orbigny gives similar accounts relative to the Patagonians.

In Bolivia, the natives prefer horse-flesh to all other

* Sir Francis, alluding to their immense strength as superior to that of the civilized man, adds: "They are also very brave, and war is their occupation. They are entirely naked, yet they bear the burning heat of summer and the freezing cold of winter. . . . They have neither bread, fruit, nor vegetables, but subsist entirely on the flesh of their mares, whom they never ride. In their wars they stop for the night, and for food they kill a mare." Comparing this with civilized warfare, Sir Francis thus graphically writes of the advantage these Indians have over more civilized people. "On a long march it seldom happens that the bullocks are able to keep up with our men, whereas the food of the Pampas is flying always before him."

food, so declares Mons. Delvaile. (*Usage Alimentaire de la Viande de Cheval*, 8vo, Paris, 1856.) [95.]

In Chili the same record is given [96.] (Frezier, *Voyage de la Mer du Sud*, 4to, Paris, 1716, p. 67; and Buffon, *Histoire Naturelle*, Supp., t. iii, page 46.) They prefer the flesh of the horse to other food.

By Europeans, this food has been always used under certain exceptional circumstances, even in these latter days.

According to Huzard (vid. Parent de Chatelet's Report to Prefect of Police, entitled *Recherches et Considerations sur l'enlevement et l'emploi des chevaux morts*, 4to, Paris, 1827,) during the French Revolution a part of the meat used by the Parisians for six months, was horse-flesh, and some used it constantly. No ill effects resulted.

The famous Larrey, Napoleon's Surgeon-in-Chief, used this food in several of the hardest of his campaigns. On the Rhine, both he and his soldiers found it good. In Egypt he used camel and horse-meat, and during the siege of Alexandria, to the very greatest advantage. It became, in fact, the most powerful means of curing an epidemic scurvy. In the Austrian campaign he not only used horse-meat, but salted it with gunpowder for want of common salt. (Note 1434.)

In *Souvenirs Militaires de 1804 à 1814* (Par M. Le Duc de Rezensac, Général de Division, *Journal de la Campagne de Russie*,*) we find several statements confirmatory of the above. In the account of the terrible

* London Quarterly Review. Littell's Living Age, Nov. 23, 1867.

retreat from Moscow, he writes: "In a cold and dark night these exhausted men threw themselves down at the edge of the fir forests, and there lit their fires and roasted horse-flesh in the blaze."

M. de Bausset, the Imperial Prefect of the Palace, harlequin, as it were, of the staff, with a certain grandeur in his mean epicurean appetites, during that horrible rout, complains that even the horses of his own carriage were stolen by the soldiers for food.

Sir Robert Wilson, who was on the Russian staff during the same retreat, says: "Thousands of horses lay groaning, half dead, and with large portions of flesh cut from them to feed the famishing."

Again it is stated that at the last attack by the Russians at Wilna, "the French had still some horses remaining, for all of them had not been devoured."

In the Crimean war, the late Dr. Baudens, General Health Inspector of the army, having read St. Hilaire's work, persuaded two batteries of artillery, encamped at Baidar, to eat horse-flesh, and they were less decimated by disease than other portions of the army.

At the same time Monsieur Decroix, at present the able chief veterinary surgeon of the Paris Guard, was in the French army and stationed near a corps of English soldiers, and he assures me that the whole air of the English camp was tainted by the putrefying masses of half buried dead horses, and while the wounded soldiers were breathing this impure atmosphere, they were also nearly famished for want of food, which these carcasses would have afforded them.

In the Morocco war, at a subsequent period, his

own horse fell, apparently paralyzed, after a very long day's journey. M. Decroix felt that, instead of leaving the poor creature to starve, when the corps would move on in the morning, it would be better to kill him forthwith. Having done so, he cut off a steak. The soldiers looked on, astonished. Nevertheless, finding he appeared to relish it, others soon followed his example, and in a very short time every part of the animal was disposed of in a like manner, and apparently much to the satisfaction of the soldiers.

We have thus made nearly the whole circuit of the globe, showing the same fact existing among various and most diverse people. We have shown that the horse has been not only the aider but the food of mankind in the chief parts of the entire globe, and that in some places it is raised solely for food.

Even in Europe, it was used for a long time, and in many localities. It is so used now at the north and east, in Germany. Heretofore, we have thought that the use of horse meat was exceptional and abnormal, and found only among a few nations. Should not the terms of this proposition be reversed? The exception is with us. St. Hilaire says, "The anomaly belongs only to the most civilized nations—nations that, with all their industry and science, have been unable to produce meat enough for their own people, while at the same time they sacrifice to an absurd prejudice what they have abundantly within their own reach."

SECOND PART.

RESUMPTION OF HORSE-FLESH AS FOOD BY THE NATIONS OF MODERN EUROPE, AND UNDER GOVERNMENTAL REGULATIONS.

For the last half century it has been more or less used in Denmark.

In 1842, (*Note sur le progrès de l'Hippophagie*, etc., par M. E. Decroix, 1865, page 4,) we learn that Dr. Perner, of Munich, began to resist the prejudice against this food, and, owing to his efforts, it has been authorized and regulated by the Bavarian Government. Other German cities have followed this example.

1847, Mons. Isidore Geoffroy St. Hilaire began the discussion of the question from his Professor's chair, at the Garden of Plants. His constant declaration was, "There are millions of Frenchmen who eat no meat, and yet, every month, thousands of kilogrammes of healthy, agreeable, and very nourishing food is used for secondary purposes or actually thrown away for manure." [p. 5.] At first, he was simply ridiculed. Soon objections were urged, but they were easily met.

In 1847, it was eaten by Pastor Bodeker, at Hanover, who continued to do so for several years, as an example to his people.

In 1854, it was publicly sold at Vienna, Usage (*alimentaire de la Viande de Cheval*. Par M. le Dr. Blatin, Vice Pres. Soc. Protec. des Animaux, Paris.)

In 1857, so many were in favor of using it in Paris, that a petition was sent to the authorities for liberty to open shops for the sale of it. Though the Board of Health advised the measure, it was not allowed.

In 1860, the Medical Society at Algiers made a similar request.

In 1864, the Paris Society* for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals made the same request of the Government, which was referred to the Minister of Agriculture, who, after consulting the Board of Health, authorized the sale.

Prizes were then offered to the first butcher who would open a shop for this object.

Meanwhile large hippophagic banquets were held in various German cities, in France and Algiers.

At Vienna, Berlin, in Wurtemberg, Bavaria, Baden, Saxony, Hanover, Schaffausen, at Lausanne, at Vilvorde, in Belgium, have arisen butchers' shops for the sale. At Vienna, during the first three years, no less than 4,725 horses afforded millions of pounds of meat.†

Finally, this last year (1867), that is, after twenty years of discussion, &c., the first shop was opened in Paris. The sale rapidly increased. The Society for the Protection of Animals, and Sisters of Charity, now daily distribute large quantities to the poor, gratuitously, collections being made to defray the expense. During the past nine months no less than eighteen shops have been opened, one recently in the very heart of Paris.

Among the most zealous of the propagandists of this food is Mons. Decroix, already alluded to, and now chief veterinary surgeon of the military of Paris. He has been called the "Parmentier of Paris," as he seems destined by his example and active zeal to force the Parisians to give up their prejudices in regard to this food, as Par-

* Decroix—cited above.

† Blatin—cited above.

mentier a century or more ago persuaded the French to use the common potato. He believes that example is the surest method of inducing people to do anything, and, therefore, he eats horse-meat frequently at his own table. Beef, mutton, and fowl, are rather exceptional articles, the horse-meat being his most frequent meat. In his intercourse with Parisians and strangers, he often invites them to dine with him upon it. It was my good fortune to be his guest on one of these occasions. The party consisted of two Parisian gentlemen, an American friend, and myself. It was a dinner party that I shall not soon forget; and, on the part of our French friends, quite full of that *piquante* vivacity found only in France. We sat from six until half-past nine p. m., and had all the varieties of bouillon, bouillie, roast, stewed, a *à mode*; dried meat, sausages; potatoes fried in lard from the horse; and fine crispy cakes made with that instead of butter. The oil procured from the horse was pure and clear, and almost odorless as the best of olive oil. I could not have recognized any difference between the two. We closed with salad dressed with that instead of olive oil!

OBJECTIONS AGAINST ITS USE.

During all the discussions that have arisen in Europe upon this aliment, I find the following objections, which, as they will be raised everywhere that the question is mooted, I will allude to at this time. Some of them fall from their own inherent absurdity, and not one of them is really tenable, or of importance, as the following summary will show.

1st. *It is unhealthy.*—The fact of its use in most of the large cities of Europe, and that no disease has resulted, is a sufficient answer for us at the present day ; but the objection was used formerly with effect in Europe. The arguments given in the previous part of the paper ; the facts of the free use of horse-meat by persons when under great difficulties in revolutionary and war times ; the experiments at the Veterinary School at Alfort ; and the personal use of the food by various individuals, in diverse localities, in later times, are proofs positive enough for reasonable persons. The fact that we have always eaten animals of the same class ; and that of all animals, none has nicer cereal or vegetable food ; and that none is so careful of his food as the horse is ; and that he will not take anything that is not perfectly clean ; these circumstances would serve to indicate that men who can eat the flesh of the filthy hog ought not to object to that of the horse. The whole life of the hog is occupied in sucking in the vilest of juices of the excrements of men and animals, and of the refuse of decaying vegetable and animal matter. He seems born simply to make manures of offal. We have all smacked our lips over a sparerib, and yet doubt about using the flesh of horse, which, *à priori*, under the physiological laws of digestion, would seem to be a more proper aliment than that of other animals who eat a greater variety of food.

Actual examination proves the healthiness of these animals which are used at Paris, that is, where a proper inspection is made. Monsieur Hazard, (*Hipophagie, ses Rapports avec l'Hygiène Publique*, 1867,) quotes

from a letter from Mons. Pierre, Inspecteur des Abattoirs á Chevaux at Paris, in which he says, that "of 2,765 horses inspected and sold for food, not one had an appreciable amount of disease that would have proved injurious to man." The increased demand for this food proves its innocuousness. Sisters of Charity urge its use to the poor who cannot get other meat to eat. One of them told me that it seemed to her that it was borne *more easily* by the stomach than common beef, and was more nourishing also. She had seen a child who seemed in a complete state of emaciation and debility, and unable to bear common food, revive, but, finally, it recovered on the soup and meat of this animal.

Chausier (page 189, Geoffroy St. Hilaire,) in 1803, made a report in behalf of the medical faculty, and on a request from the Prefect of the Seine that the faculty would decide whether dead horses could be safely given to pigs, and he declared it was perfectly healthful food. Parent du Chatelet, (Hygiène Publique,) in 1835, answered to the same effect for the Committee on Public Health.

Second Objection.—The taste is so peculiar, say the objectors, that a prejudice will always exist against its use. In answer, one may say that if we always argued in this manner, how can we account for the general use of very many articles of food, or drink, or simple luxury, which at first are rather distasteful, and which are now nearly universal. Tobacco, and many kinds of liquors, certainly require some effort before they can be used.

But the fact is, that those who complain of the taste,

are very often those who have tasted it only *in theory*. It is very difficult even for the initiated to distinguish it from beef. The first steak I ate was the juiciest and most tender article I ever tasted. Knowing what I was eating, I thought there was a slight "gamy" flavor about it, but of that I was in doubt. The most ludicrous stories are told in Paris of the mistakes made by various individuals, and from these narratives, as well as from my own experience, I am led to believe that few, if any, persons would be able to recognize the distinction, by taste, between beef and horse-meat.*

Third Objection.—It will cost too much to fatten the horse, and we cannot raise him for food alone.

I should deny this positive assertion. Why might not the small race of horses used in certain parts of Africa—too small and indocile for labor—be acclimated, and used for food alone with us, as in their native country?

In reference to fattening the animal before killing, it may be affirmed that there is no need for so doing. The flesh is better when not fat. Generally, there is

* Among these narratives, the following is one of the most striking. A gentleman desirous of introducing an unwilling friend to the use of horse-meat, invited him to breakfast, with the understanding that a horse steak would be served up. Instead, however, of giving this, the host had a nice beef steak prepared, of which his friend very daintily partook, all the while protesting that it was tolerably good, but of that *peculiarity of taste* that would forever prevent its general use! No explanation was given, but three weeks afterward the same gentleman was invited again, and he consented, on condition that he was to have no more horse steaks. His friend replied that he would make all proper arrangements to gratify his visitor, and ordered for his breakfast a good steak from a horse. The conversation, of course, soon fell upon the previous meal, and the guest descanted on the excellence of the steak actually on the table, and of its vast superiority in taste over the former! After such a declaration, of course, a confession was made by the host, much to the astonishment of the epicure.

more oleaginous matter about all its ligatures than we find in the ox. The old animal is, moreover, nearly as good as young. The worthy pastor at Hamburg ate one thirty years old, and found it excellent.

Analogy here comes to our aid. Beef, or the flesh of older animals, is really better than veal, the flesh of the younger animal.

Still further. Were the horses used as food, doubtless many younger animals would come to the shambles, in consequence of lameness or accidents of various kinds.

Fourth Objection.—Prominent among the objectors to any innovation upon long established habits appear, with a few noble exceptions, the *savans*. This is quite in accordance with human nature as seen everywhere. But in Paris, these objectors in the Academy at first presented no argument or opposing fact, but simply reported that as horse-meat would probably never be used as aliment by any community, the discussion of the question was hardly proper for a learned body. Moreover the number of horses that would necessarily be brought to slaughter, would be so small, that this was another argument against a learned body taking action in the premises. Such arguments are too flimsy to deserve a moment's notice, and yet they were gravely used by learned men.

Fifth objection.—The use of horse meat would cause a jealousy among the butchers. This falls by its own absurd weight; for although in Vienna this was momentarily an obstruction, it was one of those impedi-

ments that only eventually urge onward the movement they undertake to impede.

Sixth objection.—Monsieur Astre, (page 170, *Geó-froy St. Hilaire*,) brings forward as an argument a false statement, but thinks it overwhelming in its power, namely, that man had, for millions of years, sought for everything possible as food, but had never eaten horse, except from necessity. Now in what precedes we have the history of the entire world, including even Europe until Christianity became the predominant religion, to prove the false premises of the savant. His inference of course follows it. As *St. Hilaire* justly says: A European savant, talking thus, would be like an Arab who, because his people forswear pork as an aliment, should declare nobody in the world ever ate it, whereas if he were to cross the Straits of Gibraltar and visit Europe, he would find thousands eating this filthy animal, and wholly neglecting his own favorite horse meat. The European savant and the wild Arab would be alike in their folly.

Seventh objection.—This is still more extraordinary, and for a political economist and lawyer to make it, as does *Monsieur Molinier*, of Toulouse, [172] is remarkable. The gist of his plea is this, that if horse-flesh ever came to be eaten much, the price of it would be enhanced, so that the poor would be really but little better off than before.

The fact of its use, and increase of price, would be only a reason for its having been earlier brought into use, and far from being any argument whatever against its use at all. The argument amounts to this: if we

persuade poor people to eat horse-meat, there will be soon a demand for it, the price will be increased, and the poor will be unable to get it; *ergo*, says this learned judge, it will be better to let it all go, as now, to the dogs and the hogs! The principle to which he refers is, however, acting now in Belgium. The zoological gardens at Brussels paid fifteen francs for a horse in 1853, and fifty in 1855.

Eighth Objection.—Under this title I include a variety of weapons used in opposition to hippophagy by the public press of Paris.

a. Ridicule, which is so potent in France, has been used unsparingly. Of course, it is no argument.

b. It is said, and gravely, too, by one writer, that if we begin to eat our horses, by-and-by we shall have no horses for our carriages!

c. When all the horses are killed men will kill each other, and cannibalism will be the logical sequence of hippophagy!

d. The meat is less nourishing than beef. This is wholly denied, and the reverse of the proposition is held, by some writers, and by others who have used the food.

e. The flesh is tough. "Tough as horse-flesh" is proverbial from earliest times. But it may be questioned whether the proverb is true, and if true, whether it should prevent the poor from eating of the article provided they wished to do so.

f. It is said that only a small quantity of food can be thus gained. It would provide one fourteenth of all the food of France. But suppose it provided much

less, what argument is that against its use? Shall we refuse a few ounces because we cannot get pounds?

g. Admitting the feasibility of using horse-flesh, still we must not oppose such a time-honored prejudice. I have nothing to say upon this. It refutes itself.

h. The horse is subject to glanders, therefore we must not eat his flesh because we may be liable to take that disease. This is overthrown by the fact, proved by Rayer, that after cooking no disease is communicated to those who eat the flesh. Besides, the same argument would hold good in regard to all other animals, as all at times are diseased. [Geoffroy St. Hilaire, 185.]

i. The horse is the companion and friend of man, and, therefore, we will never eat him.

The answer to this is the question, what usually becomes of these faithful friends in their old age, for whom we have such reverential regard that we will not eat their flesh? Are they not usually sold when they can no longer work, to some vile miscreant who will drive them at times till they drop dead in the harness? Their last hours are tortured by over-work and by whippings to keep the poor creatures in motion while a single spark of life remains. This is no fancy sketch; and it is in order to prevent this inhumanity to horses, that all the societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals in Europe, except that of England, have urged hippophagy. This fact prevents ill usage in France. A single bruise or abrasion of the skin will prevent the sale of the animal. Self-interest, therefore, now prevents inhumanity. Even devils

become benevolent or saintlike if by goodness they can gain more profit to themselves.

THIRD PART.

IS THERE ANY NECESSITY FOR USING HORSE-FLESH FOR FOOD IN EUROPE OR AMERICA ?

Supposing there were no objections to the use of horse-flesh, what proof have we that it is needed either in Europe or America? Granted everything already claimed, namely, that if we should begin anew to use this food, it would be simply a revival of an ancient, perhaps excellent, custom; and second, that there is no objection to its use, either as a matter of taste, or of health, or in any other light; what, it may be asked, is the use of fighting a prejudice that, so far as all at present alive are concerned, may be said to be born with us, and has been strengthened with each year of life? Every one shrinks from the first notion of a horse steak, or horse soup; and even a French *cuisinier* cannot make that idea palatable. What use or necessity of talking more about it?

To the necessity of having more and cheaper animal food in Europe and America, let us now address ourselves.

For the necessities of Europe, I must again refer to St. Hilaire.*

Vauban, [64,] chief engineer and warrior of Louis XIV., declared that the laboring population of France had in his day, that is, toward the end of the seven-

* Cited above.

teenth century, just about one third of the amount of food given to the cavalrymen.

Voltaire, in 1769, writes that the French peasantry rarely ate meat. A few of them have soup when ill. "They fast all the year."

La Grange, the great mathematician, in 1796, while making some investigations as to the needs of the Republic, declares that about one third less food was used by the soldiers of that day than is now deemed necessary.

Bouchardat, in 1848, remarking on Vauban's statement, says, that although France is better off at this present time than it was two centuries ago, it is still far enough removed from what is really necessary for health; because even now, only a small proportion of laborers in France eat meat even twice a week.

St. Hilaire says, [page 31,] two hundred and fifty grammes of animal food is the daily need of a man in France, whereas he gets only about one third of that amount, [37,] and in the country, among the peasantry, only one sixth of the same amount, or even less than that: some eat it only a few times each year!

Well and truly may St. Hilaire write, (1856,) in presence of these appalling facts, at the termination of his very important work, as follows: "May this book, received by the public and by the administration, give the last blow to the absurd prejudice which I have been combating for nine years, and against which I shall contend, so long as I shall see under my own eyes the following spectacle: thousands of Frenchmen deprived of meat, or eating it only six times, twice, or

only once a year; and in the presence of this misery, thousands of kilogrammes of good meat abandoned everywhere to uses of secondary importance—given to hogs and dogs, or even thrown into the manure heaps.”

Surely here is enough proof that in France, and the same may be said generally of central Europe, more flesh food is needed. To meet this want, even partially, (one twelfth only of what is really necessary,*) horse-flesh is proposed, and the societies for the acclimation of foreign animals are now turning attention to the still further demand.

What I have thus far given indicates that, 1st, there is a real want of fresh animal food in Europe; 2nd, that there is now a determined and apparently successful effort making in Europe to supply that want, at least in part, by introducing horse-flesh for food. But a further question immediately arises, Of what use are such discussions to us in America? The people here all have enough to eat. This everybody knows without inquiry. We see meat every day on the tables of the poorest. Such are some of the off-hand statements of men whose position seems to give them a right to speak so authoritatively. I cannot deny their statements, for, personally, I know nothing on the subject. I present, however, the following data procured for me by the kindness of four† physicians connected with the Dispensary. These gentlemen were requested to ask every patient, who applied to them during a week,

* Page 50, St. Hilaire calculates that 266,000 horses and mules die annually in France.

† Drs. Langmaid, Appell, J. Homans, and Knight.

how often they or their families ate fresh meat. From the data thus furnished, I was enabled to make the following table :

NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE WEEK THAT MEAT IS EATEN.			
No. of Persons or Families.	Very often; every day; four to five times a week.	Less than half of the time.	Not one day in a week; never; none for six weeks; every other week; every month.
133	133		
67		67	
12			12
<hr/> Total . 212	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Per cent.	62.73	31.59	5.68

I have only to remark that if out of 212 persons, (or families, as was, probably, really the fact,) so large a proportion as 37.26 per cent. of the whole, have meat less than half of the time, there may not be so much of fresh meat for the poor, even in this country, that we can properly reject the proffer of a greater supply and of a cheaper kind, provided it can be got without much difficulty. Moreover, that proportion, if it really represents the condition of the whole poor of this city, upsets the broad assertions given above, that the poor have enough to eat.

Some returns from the Massachusetts General Hospital, though smaller in number, were made with the greatest accuracy, and certainly apply to families.* They seem to indicate that a very large proportion, over one half, of the poor applicants at the hospital, have less fresh butcher's meat than is really needed for aver-

* Dr. H. K. Oliver.

age human health, or what is usually deemed necessary for the sustenance of average human health :

NUMBER OF DAYS IN A WEEK THAT MEAT IS EATEN.

No. of Persons.	Six or seven times a week ; and at times twice daily.	Three times a week.	Less than three times a week, or very seldom.
11	11		
7		7	
19			19
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total, 37			
Per cent.	29.73	18.92	51.35

Certainly, if more than 70 per cent. of the families that applied for medical assistance at the hospital during one week, had fresh meat either very seldom or less than half of the time, is it not time to ask ourselves whether the condition of the poor of our city is all that could be wished for in this Christian land ?

By nationalities, these families were divided as follows :

Irish	24
American	7
English	3
Scotch	2
Nova Scotian	1
	<hr/>
	37

In business or trades of the heads of families, they do not seem to have been from among the very poorest classes, as the following data indicate :

Laborers	6
Mechanics (active)	14
Mechanics (sedentary)	4
Sailors and Fishermen	3
Hackmen or Teamsters	3
Women	6
Doubtful	1
	<hr/>
	37

Of the laborers, and widows, and washerwomen, twelve in number, none had a full quantity, that is, a daily supply of meat. Only two had meat three times a week, and all the rest had less than that.

Finally, bringing the two series of facts from the Dispensary and Hospital into apposition, we obtain the following tabular results.

Sources of Information.	No. of Families or persons.	Meat in plenty; very often; four, five, to seven times a week.	Meat less than half the time or scarcely at all.
Boston Dispensary . . .	212	133	79
Mass. Gen. Hosp'l . . .	37	11	26
Total,	<u>249</u>	<u>144</u>	<u>105</u>
Per centage		57.83	42.17

These combinations make it still more evident that the poor of the city of Boston do not have all the fresh meat that is desirable. That there is a very large number of persons, who daily beg for the refuse from the markets of this city, is well known to those who have meat stalls in these markets. People would not thus beg if meat were so plenteously supplied at their tables as some visitors of the poor believe.

In confirmation likewise of the same, I am permitted to quote the opinion of one of the oldest and most intelligent and devoted of the Sisters of Charity at Boston, who assures me that her opinion agrees fully with that of my correspondent's letter, namely, that fresh meat is a rare visitor to the table of many of our poor, and that even the salt meat they get is of the most inferior kind.

More extended researches I have endeavored to make, but a single individual can do but little. I have vainly

tried to get similar statistics from New York, but thus far without success.

What ought to be done in the premises? I have tried to lay a foundation; but what we shall raise upon it in this country is still an open question. Certainly it would be better for some of the poor to eat horse-meat than to eat no fresh meat at all. Will they do so? Meanwhile, will it not be well for all thinking persons to ask themselves whether it be not simply prejudice and ignorance, that prevents the community, as a body, from using this very palatable food?

WORKS ON HIPPOPHAGY CONSULTED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS PAPER.

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- 1st. A pamphlet containing articles by Dr. Blatin, Vice-President, entitled "Usage Alimentaire de la Viande de Cheval."
- 2d. Les Préjugés contre l'Usage Alimentaire de la Viande de Cheval. Par M. Decroix, Vétérinaire en premier de la Garde de Paris, Secrétaire-adjoint.
- 3d. Viande de Cheval. Lettre adressée à Monsieur le Vicomte de Valmer, Président de la Société. Par Monsieur Bourguin, Secrétaire General.
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- Lettre au redacteur du Belier. La Viande de Cheval et La Pomme de Terre. Rôle de la Lorraine dans ces deux initiatives.

